

**REPORT OF THE OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE**  
**HELD ON 21<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2017**

**MEMBERSHIP & ATTENDANCE**

**Chairman:** \* Tony Edwards

**Councillors**

- \* Jo Clark
- \* Raj Khiroya
- \* Jill Leeming
- \* Alison Preedy
- \* Steve Watkins (ex officio)
- \* Sarah Wright
- \* Jane White (ex officio)

\* Denotes members present

**Officers present**

Yvonne Merritt – Clerk  
Claire James – Deputy Clerk  
Andrew Goddard – Parish Ranger

There were two members of the public present.

**16/83 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

**16/84 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATION**

None

**16/85 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

The Committee

**RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2017 which had been taken at Full Council and agreed be approved as a true and correct record.

**16/86 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**16/70 Allotments** – The Clerk updated Members with the current situation regarding the fencing at Copmans Wick. The type of fencing had been agreed with an officer from TRDC and the Contractor had been out to quote. However there had since been three resignations in the TRDC department and Geoff Mugeridge had advised the Clerk that no progress would therefore be made for 2 – 3 months until the department was back up to strength. Meanwhile the Clerk had undertaken some research and found that TRDC had the power to write to residents with respect to the fly tipping taking place and had asked Cllr Martin Trevett, in his District capacity to take this up  
The action points from previous meetings were updated.

**16/87 ALLOTMENTS**

This agenda item was brought forward to allow a member of the public to address the committee on the subject.

At 7.40 the meeting was suspended:

Mr Hubbard, an allotment holder at Copmans Wick, raised his concerns on the current level of the vacant plots and the overgrown state of them with the effect this had on the existing plot holders struggling to keep the weeds at bay with the constant seeding from the overgrown vacant plots. He raised a number of ideas for the committee's consideration including:

- Letting quarter plots
- Letting local schools have allotments
- Allowing larger sizes of tool boxes on allotment and
- reduced rental for the first year of tenancy to allow new tenants to hire rotavators etc to clear the plots.

At 7.44pm the meeting was reconvened.

Members discussed a number of ideas to address the issue of the overgrown plots. Suggestions of loaning out a rotavator raised concerns over the Health and Safety aspects but alternatives of making a charge for the service were discussed. The additional manpower requirements for regularly strimming and possibly rotavating plots were acknowledged and the costs for this would be asessed. The cost of using weed suppressant membrane on the empty plots would be looked into. It was agreed that the Allotment Administrator would arrange a date for a site meeting at the allotments in April to allow members to see at first hand the issues being experienced.

#### **16/88 FINANCIAL COMPARISON STATEMENT 2016/17**

In response to a Member's question, the Clerk advised that the budget for allotment maintenance (**320/4605**) was not the regular mowing and strimming undertaken by the Rangers but would include items such as repairs to the gates or fences which had not been needed this year hence there was not spend against this budget line . It was noted that the invoice for the maintenance of the parish paths (**340/1310**) had been issued to HCC but payment had not yet been received. The apparent overspend on Christchurch Cemetery (**330/4675**) was explained to be the issues surrounding the damaged wall repairs and the insurance payment which had crossed over two financial years. It was suggested that notes against the budget lines would be useful and the Clerk undertook to investigate if this was possible.

The Committee

**RESOLVED**

To note the report.

#### **16/89 OFFICER'S REPORT**

**Report Recommendation 1 Lawn Cemetery:** Members discussed the additional costs incurred when a casket is booked for an interment. The Deputy Clerk had researched the costs applied by other local cemeteries and advised Members of the results

The Committee

**RESOLVED**

That an additional charge of £750 be levied for any future casket burials in the Lawn Cemetery to cover the additional costs incurred. This would be added to the Burial Charges on the website and the local Funeral Directors advised of the charge when the list of charges for 2017/18 was sent to them.

This was proposed from the Chair and agreed unanimously.

**Report Recommendation 2 Allotments:** Discussion on whether Rangers should trim the empty plots when undertaking the grass cutting had been discussed earlier in the meeting and it was agreed to defer the decision on this to the next meeting when more information would be available on the costs and Members had been on a site visit to the allotment sites.

The Chair of the Council noted that the new Assistant Ranger was now in post and assisting the Common Ranger and asked if the four Rangers were now working at capacity which the Clerk confirmed that they were. The Clerk also offered that if any Member wished to better understand the work of the Rangers they were happy to explain what they do. The Chair of the Council was going to visit them when digging a full burial to experience at first-hand what the process is. The actual costs incurred for a burial and whether the Lawn Cemetery charges were at the right level to cover these costs was then debated. The current structure of the costs were explained which are charged at the time of burial and plaque laying with no further charges made although graves continued to be maintained. Members wished to better understand the actual costs incurred and this would be analysed over the coming months in preparation for discussion on the next year's fees and charges at the November Open Spaces committee meeting. The Deputy Clerk would also research the charges made at other Cemeteries in the surrounding area and provide the results to that meeting for comparison against the Lawn Cemetery charges.

**Christchurch** Car park– Members were given an update on the current position regarding the tarmac area of the car park at Christchurch. The Clerk had sent a letter to the Chair of the Governors raising the issues. The Clerk had also found a letter from 1986 that explained the car park, tarmac area and the responsibility of HCC to maintain for the school which had been forwarded to the School. It was noted that the School had also changed to an Academy which needed to be reflected in the lease agreement. The Clerk had requested that the school provide a letter confirming the change of name that could then be kept with the lease, thus avoiding the need to rewrite the lease and the costs associated with this.

#### **At 8.45 pm Cllr Sarah Wright joined the meeting**

Members expressed concern that a copy of School's insurance policy had not yet been forthcoming. The Clerk advised that she had sent several reminders and got 'Read Receipt' back suggesting that her emails had been received and read. The Clerk was asked to send another reminder.

**Parish Paths** – The Chairman advised that he had walked about 57% of the paths himself and that there were a number of volunteers who had stepped forward to help. A meeting would be arranged in the near future to move this forward.

**Regiment Fitness:** It was noted that Regiment Fitness had gone into liquidation with an outstanding invoice to the Parish Council of £955.50 unpaid which was unlikely to get paid given the nature of the business. It was suggested that for all new licences for use of the common, a deposit be sought and/or advance payment of licence fees rather than collection in arrears. A paper would be put to the next Open Spaces meeting.

Members were advised that an invoice for £1215.72 for re-instatement works on the Common which had been outstanding for two years had been paid in the last week

The Committee

**RESOLVED**

To note the report

## **ALLOTMENTS**

### **16/90 OCCUPATION**

The Committee

#### **RESOLVED**

To note the occupation

### **16/91 WAITING LISTS**

The Committee

#### **RESOLVED**

To note the details on the waiting list.

### **16/92 ALLOTMENT USERS FORUM**

It was agreed that the Allotment Users Forum would be held prior to the July meeting with a visit to the allotments organised just prior.

## **LAWN CEMETERY**

### **16/93 INTERMENTS**

The Committee

#### **RESOLVED**

To note the number of interments that had taken place.

## **COMMON AND GROVEWOOD**

### **16/94 WILDWOOD DEN**

The Clerk advised members of a legacy of £3,500 that had been left to the Parish Council which had been suggested could be used on the Nature Trail. If the committee were happy to accept the legacy, a meeting had been arranged for the 6<sup>th</sup> April to discuss the specifics.

The Committee

#### **RESOLVED**

To accept the legacy for use on the Nature Trail

The Clerk clarified the costings for the Wildwood Den in the report. The Common Ranger expressed concerns at the proposed safety surface of bark going straight onto the bare soil and suggested that putting down a membrane would mitigate this concern. It was noted that there would be an ongoing maintenance cost of topping up the bark each year. Members were advised that the possibility of using wood chip from the Common had been explored but that this was not safety rated.

The Clerk advised that she had been advised by TRDC that Planning permission was not required, the Planning Inspectorate had advised that a section 38 was not required for the Wildwood Den and both Open Spaces Society and Natural England had given their support.

The Committee

RESOLVED

To agree to the provision of safety surfacing for the Wildwood Dens

This was proposed from the Chair and carried unanimously.

**16/95 RENEWAL OF LICENCE FOR CHRISTCHURCH SCHOOL TO USE THE COMMON FOR AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

The Committee

RESOLVED

To renew the lease, subject to sight of the Schools Insurance policy and a formal letter from the school confirming the change of name.

**16/96 FOOD EVENT ON CHORLEYWOOD COMMON**

The meeting was suspended at 9.19pm to allow Greg Hill Chairman of Friends Of the Common to address the Committee on the agenda item. The meeting was reconvened at 9.20pm.

The Clerk briefed Members on the request to run a food event on Chorleywood Common on the outfield of the Cricket Club. It was noted that that the organiser had undertaken to assess the likely weather conditions a week in advance in consultation with the Rangers and Cricket Club groundsman. The Common Ranger advised that he would like to meet with the organiser to show the areas under stewardship that should be avoided. It was noted that a charge had to be made for the use of the Common in such circumstances and it was suggested that all publicity include that Chorleywood Parish Council are supporting the event. The Chair of the Council asked for a second vote be taken on whether the charge should go to the Chairman's Charity or the Nature Trail.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That permission be granted for the event subject to all the relevant risk assessments, food hygiene certificates and licences being seen together with the public liability insurance before the event went ahead. As a concession the charge for this first year would be £250 for using the Common to be reviewed if the event was repeated.

This was proposed by Cllr Jane White, seconded by Cllr Raj Khiroya and carried unanimously.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the charge goes to the Chairman's Charity

This was proposed from the Chair and carried unanimously.

**GENERAL**

**16/97 FOUR YEAR VISION**

It was agreed that the items Security Improvements on the Common and Establish a 10 year survey of calendars were now ongoing and could therefore be removed. An additional item of the Parish Paths Leaflet was added

With respect to the parking area improvements the Clerk advised that the resurfacing of the ramps to the War memorial Permissive parking area was being undertaken as part of the Common Road resurfacing works currently taking place with the ramps element being funded by the Parish Council.

**16/98 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

There was nothing to report on this item.

**16/99 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The Committee

RESOLVED

That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest, that the press and public be temporarily excluded for agenda item 16 and they are instructed to withdraw.

**16/100 LAND REGISTRY REQUEST DOG KENNEL LANE**

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the Parish Council would not appeal against the claim by HCC for the strip of land adjacent to the Dog Kennel Lane allotments as the Urban District Council had previously sold the land to HCC. This was to be subject to provision of a letter of undertaking from HCC that the land would continue to be used for the allotments with the Parish Council continuing to maintain the hedge which would be kept.

This was proposed by Cllr Steve Watkins, Seconded by Cllr Jane White and agreed unanimously

**16/101 CLOSURE**

The meeting having commenced at 7.30 pm closed at 10.02pm.

Signed .....Agreed by email ..... Date .....23/3/17 .....

These minutes were agreed as a true and correct record at the Open Spaces meeting and signed by the Chairman.

Signed..... Date.....

**SUMMARY OF ACTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS REQUIRING ACTION**

REFERENCE	RESOLUTION / ACTION	ACTION REQUIRED	BY WHOM
OS 16/51	Resolution	To remove the arch hedge and to bury the water pipe under the path with grating to cover the pipe on the path to allow access to it should it be necessary. <i>Arch removed, pipe to be re-laid</i> <b>Ongoing</b>	Parish Rangers
OS16/58	Action	To update the committee in the Spring with progress on the Winter Works 2016 – 17 programme of works. <b>Ongoing</b>	The Clerk
OS 16/60	Action	To investigate the costs of bringing in an outside company for parking management on Village Day. <i>Parking company details had been provided and costs for Village Day would be sought.</i> <b>Ongoing</b>	The Clerk
OS 16/67	Action	To seek a sponsor for the Centre piece cake for the Village Day cake off <b>Ongoing</b>	Officers
OS 16/69 Christchurch	Action	A letter to be sent to the Chair of the Governing Body of Christchurch School raising the issues so far raised unsuccessfully direct with the school. <i>Letter had been sent but no response had yet been forthcoming</i> <b>Ongoing</b>	The Clerk
OS 16/69 Groveswood	Action	To set up a bird and bat box building event at Groveswood <i>Event set up for 5<sup>th</sup> April</i> <b>Completed</b>	The Clerk
OS16/74	Action	Groveswood Wildlife Survey report to be put on the parish Council Website	The Clerk
OS 16/76	Action	To write an article for the next edition of Chorleywood Matters explaining the CiL rules and the use of the initial monies received for the Nature Trail.	Cllr Raj Khiroya
OS 16/77	Resolution	To agree to the request for Christchurch Youth Team to use the Common on 19 <sup>th</sup> march for an activity event subject to the usual caveats of provision of Public Liability Insurance and Risk Assessment documentation and ground conditions on the day. <b>Completed</b>	The clerk

OS 16/78	Action	Cllr Tony Edwards to be the lead Cllr for the Parish Paths project with the goal of creating the leaflet by September 2017. <i>Cllr Tony Edwards had taken up the role.</i> <b>Completed</b>	Cllr Tony Edwards & the Deputy Clerk
OS 16/80	Action	It was agreed that the priority of the items Security of the Common and Parking Improvements would be switched. <b>Completed</b>	The Clerk
OS16/87	Action	To look into the costs of strimming and rotavating vacant plots and the costs of weed suppressant membrane for plots given up.	Allotment Administrator
OS16/87	Action	To arrange a site visit in April to the allotments for members to assess the current issue of the vacant allotment plots	Allotment Administrator
OS16/88	Action	To investigate whether notes could be added against budget lines in the Financial comparison statement	The Clerk
OS 16/89	Action	To analyse the actual costs incurred by the officers in the preparation of a grave for burial and the ongoing maintenance to input to the meeting of the Open Spaces that discussed the fees and charges for 2018/19.	The Deputy Clerk
OS 16/89	Action	To research the charges made at other Cemeteries in the surrounding area for the next committee meeting that discusses the 2018/19 Fees and Charges	The Deputy Clerk
OS16/89	Action	To send another reminder to Christchurch school requesting a copy of their insurance policy.	The Clerk
OS 16/89	Action	To arrange a parish paths meeting to move the leaflet forward	Deputy Clerk
OS16/89	Action	Consideration to be given to deposits and/or advance payment of licence fees for any new to be put to the next Open Spaces Committee	The Clerk & Deputy Clerk
OS16/92	Action	To arrange the next Allotment Users meeting prior to the July meeting of Open Spaces with a visit to the allotments to be set up for Members just prior to this.	Allotment Administrator